

# the guardian weekly

June 2012

**Level » Advanced**

**Style » Individual or group activities**



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: Advanced and Lower Intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from [guardian.co.uk/weekly/](http://guardian.co.uk/weekly/). You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

**Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould**

## Music brings back memories for people with dementia



Retracing steps ... dancers at Cafe Wilhelmine in Berlin **Timothy Fadek**

### Before reading

- 1 Look at the headline, photo and caption. Discuss the questions below.
  - a What is dementia? What are the key symptoms of this condition?
  - b Which people are usually affected by dementia?
  - c What are the people doing? Why?

- 2 Verbs from the article  
Complete these definitions with the help of a dictionary.
  - a If you **glide** across the dancefloor, you ...
  - b If you **shuffle** across the room, you ...

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c If you **host** a party or event, you ...

d If something **triggers** a memory, it ...

e If you **endorse** a product or idea, you ...

f If you **sip** a drink, you ...

## Article

### Music brings back memories for people with dementia

- 1 A piece of cake is halfway to his mouth when Herbert Wollschläger's eyes light up. He puts down the fork and motions for someone to ease him out of his chair and on to the dancefloor.
- 2 "That's a foxtrot," he says, raising a finger in recognition of the music that has just started up. "That's my sort of dance." The 78-year-old retired electrical engineer who has a form of dementia, probably Alzheimer's, takes his cue from a carer and suddenly his laboured shuffle has disappeared and they are gliding across the floor.
- 3 At the Dance Cafe Wilhelmine in Berlin about 20 elderly people have been brought together to escape for a few hours the dementia that shapes their lives.
- 4 "Music is like a silver bullet for those with dementia," says Christa Matter, psychologist and manager of Berlin's Alzheimer's Society, which hosts the dances every month. "People with dementia are constantly being told they can't do this, they're doing that wrong, but when they're dancing they can suddenly move with much more confidence, they know the steps, the music triggers something in them. They might not

remember the names of their spouses or children any more, but they haven't forgotten how to dance."

- 5 These theories have been endorsed by the US neurologist Oliver Sacks who, in *Musicophilia*, his study of music and the human brain, talks of music's ability to transcend Alzheimer's. "Music of the right kind can serve to orient and anchor a patient when almost nothing else can," he wrote.
- 6 The tea dances, which take place across Germany, started several years ago. "From what we observe, it would seem that the response to music is preserved even when dementia is in a very progressed form," said Matter.
- 7 As the afternoon draws on, snippets of the dancers' lives emerge - randomly, but enough to give the impression of the people behind their ravaging disabilities. Sipping apple juice, Hildegard Gehrmann, who says she is in her early 20s but was in fact born in 1923, says: "I dance at the Rose Theatre and at the Plaza." Her carers say she was indeed a professional dancer in Berlin in the 1940s.
- 8 Bettina Maier, a carer, says that by the next day many of the dancers will have forgotten they were ever at the cafe. "We show them pictures of themselves, and sometimes they laugh and say: 'I'm not that old lady!'" she said.

**Kate Connolly** Berlin

## Glossary

**to motion** (verb) make a movement with your hand or head to show what you would like another person to do

**to take a cue from someone** (phrase) receive a signal from someone that shows when to start doing something

**laboured** (adjective) slow and taking a lot of effort

**progressed** (adjective) advanced

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## While reading

### 1 Read the article and choose the correct answers.

#### 1 At the tea dance, Herbert Wollschläger ...

- a ☐ eats his cake before beautifully dancing the foxtrot.  
 b ☐ puts down his food so he can dance with another patient.  
 c ☐ stops eating and soon begins doing a smooth foxtrot.  
 d ☐ finishes his food and glides across the floor with a carer.

#### 2 According to Christa Matter, music can help dementia sufferers to ...

- a ☐ learn and enjoy a range of new dances.  
 b ☐ suddenly speak with more confidence.  
 c ☐ remember the names of their family members.  
 d ☐ regain the ability to move in a confident way

#### 3 It seems that music can assist patients to ...

- a ☐ transcend dementia when nothing else can help.  
 b ☐ transcend Alzheimer's but only in the early stages.  
 c ☐ preserve their ability to communicate at all stages.  
 d ☐ recover even when they have progressed dementia.

#### 4 Visitors to Dance Cafe Wilhelmine ...

- a ☐ often tell detailed stories about their previous lives.  
 b ☐ sometimes reveal random information about the past.  
 c ☐ frequently remember their trip to the tea dance.  
 d ☐ usually recognise photos of themselves dancing.

### 2 Read again and answer the questions.

- a How does Herbert Wollschläger normally move? What two indications can you find in the text about this?

- b How does Christa Matter describe using music with dementia patients? What do you think she means by this phrase?

- c Why can dancing be such a positive experience for the sufferers?

- d According to Oliver Sachs, what exactly can the right kind of music do? What do you think he means by this?

- e In what way is Hildegard Gehrman's story a mixture of fact and fiction?

## After reading

### 1 Synonyms - Find synonyms in the text for the words and phrases below. Paragraph numbers are in brackets.

- a to lift (2)

- b to begin (2)

- c older (3)

- d to influence (3)

- e ideas (5)

- f to go beyond (5)

- g to come closer to the end (7)

- h pieces of information (7)

Choose four of the synonyms and use them to write your own sentences.

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## 2 Identify the structures and comment on their use.

**a** He **puts down** the fork and **motions** for someone ... (paragraph 1)

**b** ... about 20 elderly people **have been brought together** ... (paragraph 3)

**c** People with dementia **are constantly being told** that they can't do this ... (paragraph 4)

**d** ... but when they're **dancing** they can suddenly move ... (paragraph 4)

**e** The tea dances, which **take place** across Germany, **started** several years ago. (paragraph 6)

**f** ... by the next day many of the dancers **will have forgotten** ... (paragraph 8)

## Activity - discussion

**In the article dance music is used as a therapy for people with dementia to enable them to regain confidence and mobility. Work with a partner and follow the steps below.**

**a** Identify another group in society who could benefit from music therapy.

**b** What type of music could be used? Why?

**c** What might be the benefits for these particular people?

**d** Work with another pair. Present and discuss your ideas..

## Answers

### Before reading

**Background:** Dementia is an illness that affects the brain causing loss of memory and reasoning and communication problems. It generally affects people over 65.

**2a** move smoothly and quietly. **b** walk slowly and noisily, without lifting your feet off the ground. **c** organise it and welcome people. **d** suddenly brings it back.

**e** say publicly that you support it. **f** take very small amounts of it at a time.

### While reading

**11c 2d 3a 4b**

**2a** Slowly and with difficulty. Paragraph 1: "someone to ease him out of his chair" Paragraph 2: "suddenly his laboured shuffle has disappeared". **b** Like a silver bullet. Music has quick and apparently positive results. **c** Sufferers normally receive negative feedback about their abilities. But when dancing they can do

something well. **d** It can orient and anchor a patient. It makes them feel less confused and calmer. **e** She claims incorrectly that she is in her 20s. But she was a professional dancer at that age, probably at the venues stated.

### After reading

**1a** raising **b** started up **c** elderly **d** shapes **e** theories **f** transcend **g** draws on **h** snippets

**2a** Present simple; used to narrate the events that come one after another in a scene. **b** Present perfect (passive); a recent action that is connected to the present. **c** Present continuous (passive); used here with 'constantly' to indicate a repeated action, one that the speaker has a negative opinion of. **d** Present continuous; an ongoing activity which acts as background information to the subsequent short events. **e** Present simple, past simple; to indicated a regular, repeated activity; to indicate an event that occurred at a specific point in the past. **f** Future perfect; to say that something will have happened by a certain time in the future.